Pacific School of Religion Berkeley, Calif.
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1933 Challenges the Church

BY FRANK D. ADAMS

. . . Days should speak, And multitude of years should teach wisdom. Job 32:7.

"Standing with folded wings of mystery,
The New Year waits to greet us—you and me."

NINETEEN thirty-two! What a year it has been! A year of superlatives, new highs and new lows—albeit the lows involve the greater suffering and present the sternest challenge.

This year has produced one of the most abundant harvests in history. No droughts, no destructive storms over wide areas, no premature frosts to blight and kill. The fields smiled with ripened grain, the gardens overflowed, the orchards and vineyards yielded their increase. The bins are full to bursting, the warehouses are bulging, the farmers are piling their surplus corn upon the ground.

Industry has lagged, to be sure, but there is yet more manufactured goods than the present market can absorb. Plenty of shoes and clothing, plenty of fuel, plenty of food in packages and tins, plenty of raw material waiting to be worked up into things needful for men.

Yet this same year has seen more hunger in our land than ever before since we became a nation. Breadlines have stretched literally for miles in our city streets. Soup kitchens have flourished wherever the wherewithal could be secured. Outdoor relief in staggering volume has been administered by harassed social agencies and departments of welfare. Citizens' committees and church benevolent societies have extended themselves to overtake some of the bitterest need.

But in spite of it all, millions are undernourished, with hundreds of thousands actually suffering from

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hunger. Cases of actual starvation have occurred all over the land. Families are shivering in unheated rooms, or huddling on the sidewalk beside a few sticks of miserable furniture, victims of an eviction notice. Winter finds multitudes with only the pitiful rags of summer to cover their poor bodies, while children without number have no shoes for their feet.

Twelve million men and women, able and frantic to work, are unemployed, walking the streets in despair or sitting dully in homes without heat or light. Why seek for work where there is none? And this vast army of enforced idlers is being recruited day by day as winter settles down over the land. Those who know are not misled by specious reports of pick-ups in industry. Thousands who have been able to battle through for the last three bleak years are now at the end of their resources. Homes are lost, savings are gone, furniture and bits of personal property have been sold piece by piece until nothing is left. So these brave fighters are at last compelled to throw themselves on public charity if they and their children are not to perish.

Poverty in the Midst of Plenty

Meantime the land groans with plenty. Granaries are full of wheat, while children cry for bread. Corn rots on the ground or is used for fuel by the farmers who can find no market for it, while millions of cupboards are empty. Fruit has fallen neglected from the trees and potatoes decay in the earth because it does not pay to gather and dig them. Bales of cotton lie on the wharves and at railroad stations because the people are not able to buy clothing. Miles and miles of empty freight-cars are rusting on sidings—because there is so much food and raw material to be hauled from producer to consumer! Railroads are going into bankruptcy—because of an unprecedented tonnage of freight waiting to be transported!

And the end is not yet. The coming weeks of winter will bring a need more appalling and a situation more baffling than anything we have yet had to face.

The inevitable accompaniments of this paradoxical situation have not been lacking. The last few months have seen the downfall of mighty business houses and the humiliation of countless captains of industry. Bankruptcies, assignments, receiverships, foreclosures —what a staggering list! Banks by the hundreds have closed their doors, crumpling like a house of cards in a storm, wiping out the life-savings of millions of their trusting patrons. Business that has managed to survive is mostly being done in "the red." Men cannot pay taxes on property which has lost its value or power to produce a revenue; so municipalities are bankrupt and schools are hampered for lack of funds. Even churches are piling up staggering deficits in spite of budgets cut to the bone, while every orphanage and charitable institution in the land faces the threat of ultimate extinction.

So it is not surprising that the recent election was also a record-breaker. The greatest popular majority and the greatest electoral vote since our present political system became established was rolled up for the new President-elect. It was a negative vote rather than a positive one. It was a protest, emotional, hysterical, almost wholly unintelligent, against a system of things which had become intolerable. It was a panicky rush towards something not too unlike that to which we have been accustomed, in the desperate hope that a change of parties and personalities might bring a measure of relief. May that hope prove not altogether in vain!

Can We Be Thankful?

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the President of the United States, in the past year of grace, did not really issue a proclamation of Thanksgiving. Perhaps he did not have the courage. Maybe he was restrained by a grim sense of humor. At any rate, Mr. Hoover contented himself with quoting a proclamation issued by George Washington nearly a century and a half ago. A mute yet eloquent commentary on the times upon which we have lately fallen!

Despite all the attempts to be funny about New Year's resolutions, the fact remains that this is a time for taking stock and the making of new beginnings. Say what you will about time in the abstract, it is yet true that we human beings stick pretty close to a time schedule. There is a significance to the New Year, a meaning and solemnity which we ascribe to no other day in the calendar. It is fitting, therefore, that we should now consider, seriously, intelligently and prayerfully, the social conditions of the land and our relation to them.

The picture which I have just roughly sketched is something to think about as we look the New Year in the face. Here are facts and values which must be recorded, weighed and pondered in any endeavor to balance the books of the old year.

Former periods of economic depression have been followed by revivals of religion. People have crowded the churches. Preaching has become more fervent. The needy, the hungry and the unemployed have turned instinctively to religion for some sort of comfort.

The Church Crisis

There is something ominous in the fact that there is no such popular reaction to the present crisis. The churches are not crowded. Sporadic revivals are reported from some of the smaller towns and among the more orthodox and reactionary denominations. But, on the whole, interest in religion, as it is represented by the organized church, has not been stimulated in the least. In the great cities, where need and distress are most acute, there are as many empty pews as ever. All churches are finding it hard to keep going. Some are even facing extinction. Obviously those who still have money to give do not have sufficient faith in the church to make up for what the poor have hitherto contributed to its support.

So we find the ministers greatly troubled. They are talking about it everywhere. It is the one topic of conversation when two or more of them get together. How is your congregation this year? Are

your collections keeping up? How about your budget for missions and benevolence? Are you getting many new members? In most cases the answers are in the negative. Those making them are puzzled, perplexed and baffled. Things are not running true to form. Why this difference? Is religion no longer a solace? Has faith no more comfort for those who are on short rations?

But this indifference is not a new or sudden phenomenon. It became apparent to some of us in the days of the World war. Whereas, up to that time, whenever the war-trumpet sounded, people rushed to their altars to invoke a blessing upon their cause and upon

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themselves as champions of it, in 1917 they did nothing of the sort. My own experience was typical. The only time when my congregation showed an increase was on the Sunday before I left for training-camp. They did not crowd the sanctuary then for comfort or to hear what I had to say. They came to take a look at a parson who was foolish enough to go into the army without seeking a chaplaincy—or in any other capacity, for that matter! I don't wonder at it now—God forgive me! For deep down in the hearts of the people there was a feeling that the church, if not religion itself, had failed them. If Christianity had really functioned in human life, this horror would never have fallen upon the world.

And that is the precise reason for the present indifference. Men feel that religion has failed—religion as represented by the churches. If religion had not somehow failed, this calamity would not have befallen us. We live in the midst of what has been called a Christian civilization, nurtured by centuries of Christian law and tradition. And the best it has been able to produce is a condition of things in which 25 per cent of the population of the richest nation on earth are compelled to be idle, wholly or in part, and without the common necessities of life; while the great majority of the remaining 75 per cent are hard put to it to keep their heads above water. Why should the victims of such a fiasco seek comfort in the churches which have fostered a religion that has produced—or at any rate tolerated—such a condition of things?

Intelligence Is Awaking

This indicates, to my way of thinking, a new awakening of popular intelligence. Old sops and sophistries will no longer suffice. In 1917 men could not reconcile hatred and wholesale killing with any tolerable religion. In 1933 they are equally unable to reconcile enforced idleness in the midst of much work to be done, hunger and nakedness in the midst of a superabundance of food and clothing, poverty in the midst of untold natural and created wealth, with any tolerable sort of religion.

To put it quite bluntly, folks are tired of being told of the virtues of poverty; of how thankful they should be that they have been spared the perils and snares of riches; of how wicked it is to possess things, especially to desire to possess them. They are tired of being told that they should accept with humility and gratitude hunger and cold, idleness and misery, in the pious expectation that all these wrongs will be righted and all these iniquities made good in a world to come. They are tired of all that. Especially since such preachments nearly always come from those who have had a good breakfast and are assured of a good dinner; from those who, having some of this world's goods, assume to extol the spiritual benefits of having none; from those who, having reaped some of the harvest of thrift, cunning or special social advantage in this world, would admonish the less fortunate to await a post mortem adjustment of their equally valid claims.

That sort of doctrine went over in the days when men believed that God sent wars, pestilence and poverty for the chastening of their souls, and might be coaxed to mitigate some of their evils in behalf of those who humbled and resigned themselves to his gracious will. But not now—to any great extent. Folks may be very hungry with respect to their stomachs; but they are quite frankly overfed on that!

It is a renaissance of human intelligence.

And men in general, clergy and laymen, are increasingly becoming aware of this revolution. Thus far it is almost wholly a subconscious revolt. It indicates the imminence of a vast change. While not quite understanding the nature of that change, alert persons feel deeply that it must be met by the fundamental spirit of religion. Otherwise we shall have chaos. Out of that spirit a new religious technique must come. "This ought to be a good time to sell religion," remarked an earnest young man to me last Sunday morning.

But we are immediately plagued by a question or two. What sort of religion will actually help us in this crisis? Will it be a new religion? How can we get to the people with it—the people who have deserted the church?

What Kind of Religion?

Startling as it may sound, the people are right. By instinct they have hit upon the truth. Priests and theologians have turned things topsy-turvy. They have tried to reverse the order which is grounded in the very nature of the universe. They have failed to achieve the reversal, and have succeeded only in mystifying, puzzling and disheartening myriads of earnest men and women. Only the prophets, lonely souls that they are, have seen and spoken the truth.

Paul stated the natural order of things, by implication at least. "The material, not the spiritual, comes first; afterward comes the spiritual." (1 Cor. 15:46.) Why has that plain statement of a primary principle been so universally ignored?

The spiritual in human life depends wholly upon the material for its basis of expression. And the first business of religion should be to find ways of establishing an adequate material foundation. Until that is done, the spiritual side of life cannot be nourished and developed. Is it not plain that all cultural, spiritual values have had to await a solid basis of material things upon which to build them? Pioneers in the wilderness had no schools. They were absorbed in the primary business of putting food into their mouths and protecting themselves from the elements and predatory beasts. Otherwise they would have quickly perished. Schools and letters came only when a measure of physical security had been achieved.

Symphony orchestras, art, culture and learning of every kind must await the day when sufficient material resources are at hand to foster them. These are the adornments of life—rich, beautiful and needful, if life is to have worth and meaning—but they are not its corner-stone. These are secondary, and forever must be in the very nature of things. Artists will starve themselves if need be to write the books and paint the pictures that haunt their hearts. But some food they must have—first! Without it the books and the pictures could never be born or even conceived.

Higher Ideals Are Developing

Religion itself comes in precisely the same sequence. The religion of savages—what is it like? The lowest forms of totemism, the crudest of superstitions. But as man was released from the pressing urge of hunger, his religious life began to unfold. Elements of beauty and mystic meaning came into it. When man had learned to till the soil and make fairly sure of a harvest, when he had established a settled abode in the midst of his cultivated land, his religion came into its early flowering. His altar was no longer a rough stone on a hilltop. He built himself a crude temple, and under its roof he made his vows and paid his devotions. And today we have lovely chapels and glorious cathedrals, within which is assembled the loveliness of music and color and incense to enrich our worship.

Meanwhile our spirits have enlarged. Greater concepts of God have come and nobler ideals of human service. But every item of it represents a superstructure built upon a material foundation, which had to be laid wide and deep and strong before any of these spiritual values could flourish or even appear.

So I repeat that it is the first business of religion to see that life has an adequate material foundation. If that sounds startling, it is only because it contradicts the false doctrine which has so long prevailed. We must lay and secure a basis upon which something truly spiritual can be built. The church has failed to do that in the past, and now the people are turning away from the church. It has expounded the virtues of poverty, winked at injustice and exploitation, and preached the doctrine of submission to the millions groaning under the heel of political and economic tyranny. It has blessed and exalted a system of things in which a few have become increasingly rich and the multitudes increasingly poor. The results, some of them, are now only too apparent.

No, this is not contradicting the word of Jesus who bade us seek first the kingdom and righteousness of God in order that material things might be added unto us. I am saying the same thing he did, only restoring it to its natural order. What is the kingdom and righteousness of God if not justice between man and man? What is it but the establishment of a brotherhood in which no one shall lack food who is willing to labor in return for it? What is it but attaining an order of things in which the needful physical foundation shall be guaranteed upon which we can build the spiritual things of culture and beauty for all mankind?

The Dream of Jesus

Jesus was not denouncing things in that immortal sermon. He had nothing to say against food and clothing. These things are so important that our Father in heaven knows we have need of them. Jesus was pleading for a social order in which these things shall be surely, equitably and abundantly produced for the benefit of all. And that order must come *first*.

Hear the conclusion of the whole matter.

Man has solved the problem of cheap, easy and abundant production of all needful things. Production is a community effort. So there is no longer any virtue in being without food and raiment. It is simply an evidence of social stupidity. Now let religion direct the consecrated intelligence of men in the business of solving the problem of just and equitable distribution. The announcement of such a purpose would release the potential energy of millions and direct it in new channels of human service. It would provide a new challenge for those who are in bitter revolt against social injustice and industrial tyranny. It would rehabilitate religion itself.

If the church would save itself it must rediscover and proclaim the gospel of the Foundation. It must seek to save the world by first getting our world so-

ciety on a basis of physical security, freed from the specter of want and starvation on the one hand and the spectacle of overproduction on the other. After that the spiritual values will not fail. They will come in their natural order. The fundamental spiritual principle of righteousness and brotherhood will be the driving power in this endeavor. Such endeavor is seeking first the kingdom of God, and it will make the church once more the champion of human rights.

The Call of the World

BY LYNN HAROLD HOUGH

Come over into Macedonia and help us. Acts 16:9.

I.

THE year 1298 A. D. found "a wise and noble citizen of Venice" in prison in Genoa. In a fight at sea off Curzola between the Venetians and the Genoese he had been captured. It was dull enough in prison for this widely traveled gentleman, and at length he began to dictate the tale of his twenty-six years of life in far places. He knew it was a wonderful story he had to tell—did Marco Polo. "For let me tell you that since our Lord God did mould with his hands our first Father Adam, even until this day, never hath there been Christian or Pagan or Tartar or Indian or any many of any nation, who in his own person hath so much knowledge and experience of divers parts of the world and its wonders as hath this Messer Marco."

So the tremendous tale was told. It was a narrative of curious and eager observation and of a touch of childlike wonder. It captured the imagination of the Middle Ages. It caused men to feel that the world was a bigger and more interesting place than they had ever understood. Through its pages men heard the call of the world. It spoke to their love of adventure. It spoke to their eagerness for fascinating experiences. It made the world a vast collection of pictures at which one could look with the greatest relish.

II.

In the second century A. D. that astounding Syrian, Lucian, wrote in Greek those works of brilliant satire and corrosive irony which come to us with the flaming of bright, sharp swords even today.

One of these dialogues, "Charon" tells how the ferryman of the dark and dismal land to which dead men go decided that he would like to see the world from which dead men come. So he got a day off and suddenly appeared in lands where the sun shines. He persuaded Hermes to be his guide. The two piled a few mountains one upon another and so got a far, wide view of the world. Charon wanted an intense intimate view as well and with the aid of a line from Homer Hermes made that possible. With cynical and condescending laughter they looked upon the strange, vain world of little men. Their sentences gleam with sardonic and sometimes bitter mirth. Charon is surprised when he sees gold that men should make such a time about it. But Hermes tells him he does not know what wars and plots and robberies and perjuries and murders it has to answer for. They look at Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, luxuriously happy and powerful but Hermes remarks that the slave who stands beside him will betray him to the Satrap Oroetes and he will be crucified. Each man hangs from the spindle which the Fates control, a thread sustaining him.

"Behold," says Hermes, "the money grabbers—never to be money spenders, and the noble army of litigant neighbors." "All men are bubbles, great or small, inflated with the breath of life," says Charon; "some are destined to last for a brief space, others perish at the very moment of birth: but all must inevitably burst." So the gods discuss the absurd affairs of men.

In this writing of Lucian you hear the call of the world. It is a call to exercise every gift of scorn and satire as you look upon the widely spread pageant of human life. If you are a person of superior mind the world is a place you will despise.

III.

In our own time Count Hermann Keyserling journeyed far over the earth and told the tale of his wanderings in the "Travel Diary of a Philosopher." It is a journey among the minds and hearts and souls of men. A mind strangely sensitive exposes its delicate surfaces to the thoughts and emotions and all the subtle experiences of many varieties of men. There is intellectual penetration. There is spiritual insight. And there are curious responses to the things of sense. "A completely developed race," says Count Keyserling, "is almost without exception less original than an incompletely developed one. Modern England will not produce a Shakespeare." "As far as my own person is concerned," he says, "I confine myself to penetrating into the significance of things." "There is an immense difference between retaining contact and writing of the world and becoming its victim." "Hindooism in its boundless richness can only be understood as a vegetative process." "While studying the teachings of Buddha I frequently asked myself whether he wishes to make plants of men." So he goes about seeing, feeling, understanding. And when he leaves a country he closes the pages of its book. That country has made its contribution to his mind. To understand is his only desire. He has no sense of being responsible for the lands which he visits. The call of the world is a call for comprehension and not a call for help.

In these ways then a man may hear the call of the world. It may speak to his curiosity and his love of adventure as it called to Marco Polo. It may speak to his sardonic sense of life's incongruities. So the world called to Lucian. It may speak to his love of comprehending, of analyzing and understanding. So the world has called to Count Hermann Keyserling.

IV.

But there is quite another fashion in which a man may feel the call of the world. Sleeping by the waters of the throbbing and restless sea one night in the first

century A. D. a weary man with the marks of many lands upon his sensitive, responsive, face found the vague thoughts of the day mastering his dreams. He saw the figure of a man standing on the shore of the land beyond the sea. The man was motioning. The man was calling. He was crying, "Come over and help us."

To the Apostle Paul the unknown land was always the beckoning land. To that eager spirit the world was always calling. But the call of the world to Paul was the call of a great need. He had come to the astounding conclusion that the world was a vast place for which he was responsible. He followed an astonishing teacher who taught that every man is the neighbor of every other man. So in Paul the Good Samaritan left the road from Jerusalem to Jericho and started to travel upon all the roads of all the world looking for fellow travelers wounded and distressed whom he might succor. To Paul the call of the world was not a call to the exercise of that corrosive faculty of scorn which turns the little ways of little men to bitter laughter, though he could pour forth vials of wrath against the evils which men hold to their hearts. To Paul the call of the world was not a call to the subtle understanding of the strange experiences of men, though he brought an amazingly comprehending mind to the apprehension of the meaning of human experience.

We Are Responsible!

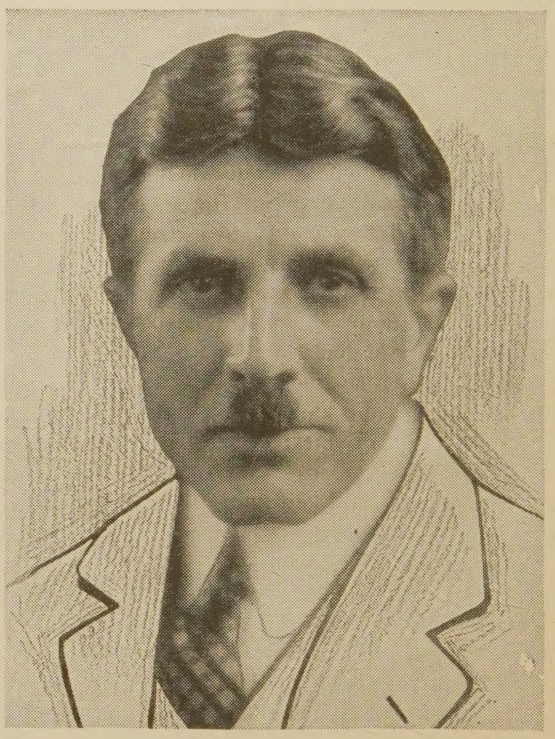
To Paul the world was your world. Or rather it was the world of the God whom you worshiped. It was the world of men who were to be your brothers in the great new life God offered to mankind. It was the world for which Christ died. The cross had put a seal of nobility upon every human heart. You could not let the world alone. The world could not let you alone. Its unconscious need haunted your dreams. Its wistful figures with outstretched hands called you to cross restless seas and come to their help. The world was calling. And you must answer the call.

The sense that we are responsible for the world is an essential part of Christianity. Indeed, the Christian religion is itself an organic thing. It is not like a department store where you can choose and take and leave among the wares. You must take the whole of it, every part fitting into every other part. Each virtue and each passion belonging to Christian living has its inevitable place.

A man cannot go very far with Christianity without hearing the call of the world. And the sense of sympathetic responsibility for all the kinds of people there are in the world has moved out from the center of the Christian religion and entered deeply into modern life. It has produced men like Sir Robert Hart, who was more than a force in the organization of the collecting of customs in China, who indeed became a guide, philosopher and friend, a noble and appreciated servant of the Chinese people. Indeed the British tradition has lent itself freely to the creation of men and women who in an astonishing sense have entered into the lives of far off peoples. Miss Gertrude Bell almost accomplished the impossible in Arabia. And T. E. Lawrence proved that a man of one land may make the very hopes and fears and expectations of an alien civilization his own.

But has the Christian church itself maintained the great tradition? Do Christians still see visions in the night of human hands everywhere with gestures of eager invitation? Do Christians still hear voices all about the world crying, "Come over and help us"?

The whole tale of the modern uprising of men who have heard the call of the world, the tale which goes to India with Carey, to Africa with Livingstone and all about the world with the passion of powerful lives



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devoted to far-flung service, gives noble reply to these questions. The audacious story of the quiet women in all the churches praying and giving for the winning of the world has its own tremendous spiritual romance. And that great scholar and musician who gives Bach concerts in London and serves as a physician to lonely and underprivileged men and women and little children in Africa may be a symbol of the living fire of the ancient passion.

We Have Sinned!

We must frankly recognize, however, that if we do not have a new message there is at least a new accent which is necessary on the part of the men and women who respond to the call of the world today. Our western civilization, with all its noble achievements, has been a terribly soiled and terribly soiling force in the world. It is all too easy for the men of underprivileged and backward races to feel that we come to them with exploitation in one hand and a message of good will in the other. It is all too easy

for men and women and little children suffering from wounds inflicted by the west to feel that they can only spurn a message which is brought by western hands. At the recent Jerusalem conference attention was called to a matter which was discussed in a European parliament in 1927. "The question was put to the government responsible. 'Is it a fact that in one contingent of forced laborers ninety-four per cent died?'" The fact was not denied. The official reply was that this was true of one contingent only, that in other cases in the same area the death rate was not more than forty per cent or fifty per cent." If some one greater than Mrs. Browning could write a cry of the child races of the world against those who have exploited them it would be an unspeakably terrible indictment.

And in the west itself we "light half-believers of our casual creeds" have twenty centuries of sinning against the light behind us. Fertilizing rivers of Christian idealism have flowed through our dark and terrible continents. But how much of our life they have left untouched! Our own materialism is after its fashion a corrosive and corrupting paganism, even as are those other evils which we find in more backward lands.

We Must Repent!

And so we come to the new note without which sad and bitter races naturally regard the whole missionary enterprise as a hideous impertinence on the part of proud and condescending representatives of alien and exploiting races. That new note is repentance.

Our faces are drawn with the agony of our own failure as we go with the great shining torch in our hands. "Here is the torch," we cry, "for twenty centuries we have possessed it. God knows we have not been worthy of it. But in spite of our wretched failure we know that the torch is the one great light. And unworthy as we have been to possess it, we do yet value it more than anything else in all the world. And we cannot do other than pass it on."

Then, as we hand the torch to men of other races in old sad lands, we cry: "Here is the torch. Take it and hold it aloft. God grant that you may do better with it than we have done. Its light belongs to you if you will have it. And as we give it we will also keep it and try with your help to be more worthy of it in the years to come."

It is the simple truth that the messenger of Christianity becomes invincible as he goes forth with repentance in his heart and the torch in his hand. The repentance of the West will break the heart of the East and make a place for the lordship of Jesus Christ.

It is clear enough, then, that it is a costly matter —this hearing of the call of the world. In truth Bunyan put only one-half of the truth into his glorious allegory. Christian lost his burden when he came to the cross. That is nobly true. But in another sense it is at the cross that Christian finds his burden. For before the cross lies a planet which the Christian, Atlas-like, is to lift and bind upon his back. And through great suffering and splendid years he is to go staggering on carrying that burden in the name of the Crucified. So he hears and heeds the call of the world.

Professor Halford Luccock, of Yale, tells of a volume containing seven thousand words which are often mispronounced and remarks whimsically that it is rather terrifying that so many words can be mispronounced. Then he goes on to suggest that such little words as "I" and "they" are most often and most tragically mispronounced. In truth, Christianity has a strange power. It can take the unlovely self-conscious out of "I." It can take the proud hard condescension out of "they." It can put a soul of fraternity into "we." And when it does all this we are ready to hear the call of the world. We are ready to follow Christian to the cross, where we will leave one burden and find another. We are ready to fasten the world upon our backs and with that mighty burden to march down the summoning and tremendous years.

The Counsel of the Carpenter

By William H. Boddy

My Father worketh even until now and I work. John 5:17.

TODAY eleven millions of men and women in our country are begging for a chance to earn their bread and finding no opportunity. Anxiety is gnawing at the hearts of multitudes because they can see no provision for life's elemental necessities. If today every Christian conscience is not aroused and every Christian mind does not dare to think courageously concerning the ethical implications of our state, then surely some subtle moral paralysis has settled down upon the human spirit. Could anything be more direly dramatic than this situation? A plethora of food, and starvation; an abundance of clothing, and nakedness; plenty of lumber and stone, and a homeless multitude. If anyone can reflect upon such facts as these and not ask himself searching questions concerning the fundamental principles upon which our associated life is built, then he must be either too selfish or too ignorant to do any honest thinking.

But I am persuaded better things of you. And so this morning I ask you to think with me of some principles, radical, overturning, Christian principles which must be built into the foundations of our social and economic life if we are to have a just and human civilization—a civilization that would win the approval of him whom we call our Master.

I.

The more I think of it the more I am sure that the mission and passion of the human-hearted Jesus could most adequately be summed up in brief phrase by saying, "He was utterly devoted to the conservation of human values." He wanted to save souls. And when you get to his own words—beyond the accretions of

later years and the apocalyptic figures of his own time —down to those teachings deeply embedded in the synoptic soil, you see that his salvation was not so much the escape from punishment hereafter—it was the release of life, abundant life, here and now. Jesus sought to save souls from *all* the influences that thwarted and hurt and diseased them. That is the reason he said so much about inordinate wealth; he saw it hurting souls—both of the possessed and the dispossessed. That's why he cried out against selfishness and hypocrisy and hatred. They are influences that shrivel personality. He taught love and justice and faith as qualities that enlarge and fertilize the soul.

In my own thinking—and I believe this is true to Jesus—that is sin which thwarts and dwarfs personality within oneself or in another. That is righteousness which gives to oneself and to others the opportunity of the freest, most abundant life.

The Master pointed to a child and said, "Rather than cause one of these to stumble it were better that a man have a millstone tied about his neck and he be cast into the depths of the sea." Those sound like extravagant words. But Jesus is not talking of teaching a child to say mistaken words in a catechetical exercise. He is speaking of the dwarfing and deforming of a human spirit. His bitterest words of condemnation, such as "Woe unto you, ye tithe mint and anise and cummin but ye have left undone the weightier matters of the law—justice and mercy and faith," had to do with those who were careless or cruel where human values were involved. His highest commendation is for the good Samaritan who bound up the wounds of a stranger. And he says that those only shall be accounted righteous at last who have healed the sick and fed the hungry and clothed the naked. That is another way of saying that the "Come ye blessed of my Father" shall be only for those who were so sensitive to the values of a human soul that a spirit in distress elicited the deep compassion of their hearts and the unfailing service of their hands.

Jesus' Defense of Personality

Yes, as Dr. Fosdick has said, "Take it or leave it, Christianity at its best has taken up the cudgels for personality, for its divine origin, its spiritual nature, its infinite worth and endless possibilities." Well, then, what must be the attitude of Jesus and his followers toward any sin, any system, any institution or order that makes possible and easy the stultification of human souls? That is why wherever there is true and intelligent Christianity there must be a flaming hatred of war and all its breeding and an indignant rebellion against a social order that makes possible the exploitation of human souls. One who has caught the spirit of the Son of Man will never be tolerant of that which crushes the hope and joy and faith out of men's hearts.

Now there is nothing in our collective experience which so dwarfs human souls as great wealth and dire poverty, and the conditions and motives which make for both situations. I am not suggesting that there can be but one level of material rewards in life. I do not think that is possible. I doubt if it is desirable. And I hasten to say that many men have made their wealth an incident in their consecrated lives and have used their fortunes as a means of serving God through men. So, here and there, men have become saints amid conditions of enforced penury. But facts compel the admission that these are exceptions. I know of men and women who have found in voluntary poverty a great means of grace. I can understand that. But on the whole, there is nothing so disintegrating to personality, nothing so subversive of human values as enforced poverty and unemployment—unless it is superabundant

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wealth. And no Christian can ever regard as final any system of which these are an integral and oft-recurring part. Ours is normally a prosperous country. How prosperous? Do you know? Well, you do know that before the recent amendment to the income tax law every unmarried person who received $125 per month was compelled to file an income tax return; and that any married man with wife and family who received about $275 per month had to make a return. There are seventy-two million people in our country over twenty-one years of age and in those prosperous days of 1930—the tax return being for 1929—less than three people out of every one hundred paid any tax. In the boom year of 1928 it was but four out of one hundred. That suggests the volume of poverty in normal times. There have always been between a million and two million unemployed in the country. This depression is bringing into bold tragic relief the *chronic* disease of our social order. What is it doing to human souls?

The other day an unemployed man in this city said: "My gas was shut off. But I plugged in and got gas anyway. I have stolen coal. You may wonder how

it has affected my mind. A year ago if I saw a hold-up I would have risked my life to prevent it. Today I would say, 'I hope he has a fat politician or a banker and kills him'." And it was only the other day a fine man sat in a minister's study and said meditatively—note the moral sensitiveness of this man: "If I could by any honest means get the money to pay my back rent and insurance, I would the next minute commit suicide; I don't think God would hold me responsible if I took the life of my whole family."

Men and women, I urge upon you the moral duty of being intelligent concerning these things. What has brought about this state? How long did it exist for millions of others before it affected you and me? Is there something inherent in our system that is careless of human values? Aye, is there something that makes its success dependent upon exploiting souls for whom Christ died? Do you think on these things? What do you read? How pray you? As Christians can you and I support and acclaim any kind of social plan or economic order which does not make its basic principle the conservation of human values?

Listen to Reginald Wright Kaufman, in his "The March of the Hungry Men":

In the dream of your downy couches, through the shades of your pampered sleep,
Give ear, you can hear it coming, the tide that is steady and deep;
Give ear, for the sound is growing, from the desert and dungeon and den;
The tramp of the marching millions, the March of the Hungry Men.

Through the depths of the devil's darkness, with the distant stars for light,
They are coming, the while you slumber, and they come with the might of Right.
On a morrow—perhaps tomorrow—you will waken and see, and then
You will hand the keys of the cities to the ranks of the Hungry Men.

II.

And now, as the aim of Jesus is the saving and release of the values in personality, his moral dynamic to this end is love—not a vaporous sentimentality, but the love which is undiscourageable good will; the practice of mutuality and the recognition of human solidarity. Jesus would replace ruthless competition with brotherly cooperation and he would do this over the whole area of life. Jesus has undertaken to change the fundamental motive of life from *acquisition* to *contribution*. He would have men find the fulness of life by submerging self in the quest of the common good. He stands upon hilltops of life crying out to the unbelieving crowds, "They who lose their lives shall find them."

Sometimes sitting side by side in this church are two men, friends and relatives. One is a distinguished scientist; the other a successful industrialist. The scientist searches for the secrets of nature that he may bless mankind. He asks only enough that he may live in modest comfort, educate his family, carry on his research and provide for a frugal and independent old age. His friend, whose genius lies in another direction, expects, as a part of our system, that he shall accumulate a very large fortune in his own right. He looks for no particular acclaim of society, nor is his primary motive to serve society. Now one of these attitudes is Christian; the other—through no fault of the individual—is not Christian. I insist, as I stand near Christ's cross, that we cannot heal the open wounds of the world until the industrial genius is actuated by the same motive as the scientist, the educator, and, I hope, the minister—the joy and glory of serving man for his own sake.

As a substitute for love which Jesus declared the only adequate moral motive for men and society, we are offered "enlightened self-interest." It was a half-century ago that Robertson of Brighton said: "We are told that what chivalry and honor cannot do, personal enlightened self-interest will do. Trade will bind men together in one family. When they feel it their interest to be brothers, they will be brothers." And then with prophetic voice he cried: "Brethren, that which is built on selfishness cannot stand. We who have observed the ways of God in the past are waiting in quiet and awful expectation until he shall confound this system as he has confounded those which have gone before. While men are talking of civilization and peace there is heard the noise of armies gathering rank upon rank, east, west, north and south, and rolling toward us the crashing thunders of universal war." Today, standing in the backwash of that awful conflict, we know what insight was in the words of that man of God. The choice is ever the same—it bears down upon us now with awful and tragic immediacy—shall the motive of economic and social life be self-interest or human welfare? Shall it be Christ or the world?

III.

But for my part, I have no hope to make the goal of life the saving of human values and its motive inclusive human love, save through the power of deep, vital, and soul-cleansing religion. They hope in vain who expect to save society by rationalism. There is only one power that can change men's ideals and release the imprisoned splendor of the soul. That is the power of God seen in Jesus of Nazareth. "Apart from me ye can do nothing." Only the spirit of God capturing the citadel of the soul can release the Love that shall build the Kingdom of Kindness.

A few days ago I read two striking utterances. One is from that brilliant skeptic, Bertrand Russell. He says: "If existing knowledge were used and tested, we could bring the millennium in a generation." Then very wistfully, I think, he adds: "But none of this can come about without Love. The knowledge exists; the lack of Love prevents its being applied." And it is another sophisticate, James Branch Cabell, who says: "Man alone of all the animals can acquire a trait by assuming, in defiance of reason, that he already possesses it—for man alone of all the animals plays the ape to his dreams." Man alone can ape his dreams. That means only man has the strange and sublime power of creative faith. Could anything be said more effectively than the

utterances of these two men as to the need of the world for love and faith? But love and faith are the very essence of true religion. Without religion they do not flourish.

It is not then, primarily, by might of organization, not by power of economic reconstruction, that our society shall be healed. The springs of moral creativeness, the power that can bring a new birth to a spent society is the spirit of the Eternal God. Let us give ourselves anew to him and through him pour out our souls upon the altars of a needy and weary world. Let us dare heed the counsel of the Carpenter.

The Fifth Gospel

By Joseph Fort Newton

"For the time is at hand." "I am alive for evermore." "I make all things new." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Revelation 1:3,18; 20:5; 22:20.

A SENSE of immediacy, of urgency, of eager expectation, throbs in these words. They are impetuous, insistent, athrill with impending revelations and unguessed disclosures. They move swiftly, like a herald approaching, bringing tidings of incredible happenings about to transpire. One feels the stir of new impulses, of nameless prophecies, as of a Divine Order brooding over the life of man, trying to break into it. There are to be changes in heaven and on earth; all things are to be new. The City of God is suspended in the sky, waiting until man is ready and worthy to receive it. As we read let us remember the words of refrain: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

In his remarkable book, "The Divine Aspect of History," Mozley has this striking and suggestive sentence: "With the death of Jesus our earthly life for the first time struck root in the fields of eternity." Not for the first time, surely, but more deeply, more clearly, and therefore more fruitfully. Something Jesus had which the prophets only sought and foretold; a seed which he implanted—a new impulse, a new power, a new passion, a new and haunting love—which has grown a richer harvest since he lived, and because he still lives. Of this new divine life, striking deeper root in the field of time, the Book of Revelation is an interpretation, an unfolding. It is the Fifth Gospel, the Gospel of the Christ of History, whose militant love and healing mercy is the hope of humanity—showing how the truth which Jesus "began to do and teach" in the days of his flesh, fulfills itself.

Unveiling the Spiritual

It is a Christian Apocalypse—as the word means, an uncovering, a drawing aside of a curtain, unveiling the impalpable forces within the pageant of events—that is, an attempt to expound, or body forth, in symbols the meaning and basic issues of history and of the final revelation of Christ. Its primary purpose is not so much to predict as to interpret. Like the Hebrew prophets, the writer is thinking most of the present needs of those for whom he writes, who were living in the cloudy sunset of an epoch. But, in interpreting the spiritual significance of his own age, he furnished the church with the key to unlock the secrets of every age; for the spiritual forces behind all ages are the same. Throughout the book human history is regarded from the standpoint of the eternal world, as if the writer were standing outside the time-order looking down upon the pageant. History is seen to be a contest between spiritual forces, of which the earth is the battleground; and if evil often seems to be stronger, it is doomed to defeat in the end—albeit not without tumult, terror and tragedy.

There is a certain order in the book, but it is not chronological. Its visions overlap and blend, like the dissolving views of a moving-picture, and are less a series of events than a series of scenes, often strange and terrible, but sometimes lovely and grand, of the divine judgment working itself out in history. The indications of time in the book are not to be taken literally; they are a part of its symbolism. No attempt is made to foretell the length of the Christian dispensation; all the writer can see is that the conflict between the church and the world will go on, and become more intense as the end draws near—but the victory of spiritual forces is sure. Three things stand out distinctly, and should be kept in mind:

First, that God is working out his purpose in all history, even in the darkest times of perplexity and evil, when the earth seems swept clean of every divine footprint. World empires may defy him for a moment, but their triumph is a brief prelude to disaster, and they "wither into tired dust" like Nineveh and Tyre.

Second, the goal of human history is the final triumph of Christ: a victory to be achieved, as the writer sees it, not so much by the gradual improvement of society as by the intervention of God. If there is a law of growth and unfolding, there is also a Law of Catastrophe.

Third, the church must never on any account, no matter what the temptation, parley or compromise with the evil spirit of the world, lest by purchasing favor she betray her Master, who refused to yield an inch to evil even to win all the kingdoms of the earth.

Not a Book of Puzzles

Such is the ordinary outline of the spirit and purpose of the book, but some of us are not satisfied with it. Unfortunately, as matters now stand, not a few who try to read the book find it to be anything but a Book of Revelation. They go to it expecting a disclosure, as the title indicates, and come away confused. They discover good counsel, some bejeweled passages, and stanzas of haunting beauty and comfort, but they feel that there has been no actual revelation. The imagery is alien, the pictures seem more fanciful than real, and in looking through its strange art gallery they find more to bewilder than to enlighten. Some one said that the book, if it did not find him crazy, left him so. Luther declined to expound it. So

did Calvin, and it had been better if certain others had followed their example. Alas! this golden book has fallen into the hands of the puzzle-maker and the prophecy-monger, to whom it is a divine almanac, and whose exegesis is as ingenuous as it is absurd. It has been used as a kind of cryptogram to prove when the world is coming to an end, as if that were startling information. Of course, the world is always coming to an end, and always beginning again, and so it will be till the end be ended. One recalls the remark of Emerson to one of these apostles, who told him that the world was about to be burned up: "Never mind, never mind; we can get along without it."

The question of the authorship of the Apocalypse need not detain us. If it was not written by St. John the Divine, it was the work of some master mind who

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interpreted his faith and vision in the early time, as Browning did in our own day in "The Death in the Desert." Pursued by the foes of his faith, St. John took refuge in a cave in the desert, where his mortal hour came upon him. As the end approached, in rapt prophetic vision he foresaw, with his bright dying eyes, all the subtle attacks on the faith of Jesus, and disarmed them—as later, in a like desperate hour, when Rome reeled to its fall, and the world was shaken and almost shattered, God gave to St. Augustine a vision of "The City of God." The teaching of David Strauss, at whose touch all things turned to myth and allegory; the unctuous and persuasive doubt of Renan, in which one hears always an echo of irony; these and the ruder forms of denial, the dying seer predicted and refuted. Let men deny what dogmas they will, let them tear the gospel record to tatters, they do not so much as touch the basis of faith as Browning states it in that poem; and he is true to the faith and vision of St. John.

Let us assume, then, that the Apocalypse was written either by St. John or by his inspiration, and see if we can find the key to its interpretation. St. John was the only one of the apostles who died a natural death; all the others suffered martyrdom in one form or another. James the brother of Jesus and James the son of Zebedee were killed by mobs in Jerusalem. Matthew was slain in Ethiopia and Thomas in East India. Philip was hanged in Phrygia. Bartholomew was flayed alive in Armenia. Andrew, Simon the Zealot and Simon Peter were crucified—Peter with his head downward, lest he be like his Lord whom he once denied. Matthias and St. Paul were beheaded. But the Beloved Disciple lived to the great age of ninety, carried about in a cot by his friends, his gospel summed up in the saying, "Little children, love one another." When he was very old and bowed with sorrow he was banished to the Isle of Patmos and made to work in the quarries. But that was not the worst hardship that befell him. Darkness seemed to settle over the world, and at Patmos the message came that Peter and Andrew had been put to death, and that the little church which he had planted at Ephesus had been broken up by persecution. Other groups of disciples had been driven by the wind and scattered. Everything seemed lost, as if the cause of Christ were a forlorn defeat, and the gates of hell had prevailed. Besides the holy city of Jerusalem had been captured and destroyed, and with the fall of the Temple the world seemed to be falling to pieces.

Amid a Crashing World

Such is the setting of the Apocalypse, with its many windows of vision opening, not into the past, not into the future, but into the hidden, eternal present; and the aged apostle was shown that the church does not depend on Peter, Paul, Andrew, or John, but upon the eternal Christ, who is alive forevermore. It was a vision vouchsafed to a good soldier of righteousness, an apostle of love, sustaining his faith and fortifying his spirit. No matter how we may interpret it, glibly as the psychologist too often does, or reverently and profoundly as Maurice did, surely it is proof of two things—first, the power of the seer to go beyond the historian, to rise above the storms and disasters of history and read their meaning from above downward; and second, the all-conquering, all-transfiguring power of Christian faith, and its far-shining insight which sees the final victory of Christ. Here is the message of the Book of Vision to us today, living as we are in a time of world-crisis and upheaval like that in which it was written, and we need to recover that message—or, better still, that faith—for our comfort and courage. In recent years there has been a strong tendency to go back to the Christ of long ago; but what we need in the confusions of our day is a sense of the Living Christ. It is not a question as to the coming of Christ, but the fact that he is here! that we need to grasp.

Truly, the Apocalypse is a fifth Gospel, and the faith and spirit of this Gospel is essential to an understanding of the other four Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John show us, from different angles, the Christ of Palestine, lovely, winning, heroic, tormented, but at last triumphant—painting the picture with incomparable art upon a simple canvas. But in the fifth Gospel we are shown the Living and Marching Christ upon a background of clashing armies, shouting hosts, and burning cities, as if the seer-like artist had dipped his brush in earthquake and eclipse, and the shadows of the bottomless pit, using crags and mountains, clouds and seas, to supplement his art. Here is the Christ, not only of the four Gospels, but of the four corners of the earth; the Christ of the militant kingdom and the kingdom of peace; the Christ of war and pestilence and disaster, as well as of holiness and of blessedness. It is the Christ of Christian history, not the glorified Christ, or the ascended Christ, but the Christ of today. Here his movements are not along the stony paths of Judea, but in vast ranges of mind, in long stretches of time.

Reveals Christ Unbound

It is a portrayal, a foreshadowing, an interpretation of Christ Unbound, released and set free to mingle in the life of the world in whose contests and tragedies the will of God is being wrought out. There is much to remind us of "Prometheus Unbound," by Shelley, one using the background of Greek religion and the other the scenery of Jewish apocalypse with its fantastic imagery, much of which, no doubt, was designed to heighten the coloring of the great picture. Indeed, the parallelism between the Crucified One and Prometheus nailed to the cliff is very striking, and one feels that Shelley was richly indebted to the Apocalypse, and that his poem is more Christian than Greek. There is no need to say that the Apocalypse is not only truer, but profounder, as it is more august and awful in its imagery. Also, its imagery is entirely in keeping with the sublimity of the vision, the writer having exhausted heaven and earth, almost, in his effort to set forth "that unfinished life which shapes the world."

Never was there such a chamber of imagery, if once we grasp the key to it. Death and hell, lightning and thunders, hail and fire mingle with blood, darkened suns, stars cast like unripe figs, the sky rolled up like a scroll, mountains uprooted, the pit of the abyss opened, plagues, the sickle of disease, a Scarlet Woman, four horsemen riding down the wind, horrors by day and horrors by night, metals gleaming in a furnace, a sea of glass clear as crystal, the whiteness of snow, many radiant jewels, the tree of life, seven-headed, ten-horned beasts, agonies unutterable, diadems of victory, the great white throne of God, judgment, voices like the sound of many waters of heavenly hosts, choruses, seven-fold hallelujahs—how strange it all is to our eyes and ears, and how confusing at first! Yet, when we see the central Figure of the scene, now a King, now a Child, now a Prince, now a Prophet, and always a Lamb slain in eternal sacrifice, one feels that it might have been written yesterday. Surely no book of the Bible has more to say to us today than the solemn Book of Vision, shutting up its scenes, as Milton said, between the stillness of heavenly silence and the echoes of divine symphonies.

A Book for These Times

If the Apocalypse closes the Bible, it opens the book of the world, translating Christ into the vacabulary of the larger efforts, the race problems, the social achievements of history. It is the only fitting close of the Bible, being a vision neither of things past nor of future things, but of the eternal present. The Babylon of the book is neither Rome nor the city of the Euphrates. It is any center of rebellion against light, any city where life treads on life, where evil is unshamed, and men "traffic with souls." Man began in a garden but he ends in a city, and if it is not the City of God it is a cesspool or a human volcano. It is our city. It is London. It is Paris. It is New York. The beast with seven heads and ten horns is not Caesar alone. It is the unscrupulous, ruthless Man of Power in every age, in every land, like Stalin, the Man of Steel in Russia, whose hands drip with blood. He may be a monarch, a millionaire, or a demagogue; he is the incarnation of anti-Christ. The Christ whose presence is the glory of the book is the immanent Christ, in whom the human and the divine blend—mighty, but merciful, his word sharper than a two-edged sword, yet redeeming, his face as the sun shining in splendor, his voice like music. Sometimes he is riding a red horse, sometimes a black horse, and at last the white horse of conquest—victor over all that is untrue, unclean, and unjust by "that strange power which men call weakness."

Such, in swift outline, is the Fifth Gospel of Christ, and we need to read it in a time of dismal disillusionment and dire confusion when the courage of the church, as well as its faith, is sorely tried. Once more we are shown that Mammonism, Materialism and Militarism are the old enemies of Christ, and that his weapon is a militant love, all-hoping, all-believing, all-enduring, and therefore undefeatable. If we take this Book of Vision to heart, it will reveal a shining Figure moving amid the shadows and horrors of our time, his truth a torch of light in the darkness, his gospel the hope of humanity today, tomorrow, for ever. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

A New Year

HERE'S a clean year,
A white year.
Reach your hand and take it.
You are
The builder,
And no one else can make it.

See what it is
That waits here,
Whole and new;
It's not a year only,
But a world
For you!

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.

Thank God for Testing Times!

BY JOHN R. MOTT

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into manifold trials. James 1:2.

I VENTURE to state that none of us have come from a field where the people are not undergoing serious economic depression. In fact, the most distinctive thing about the current depression is the fact of its worldwide extent. Without doubt the present is a time of impossible burdens, of severe tension, of manifold trials, of intense conflicts, of harassing unsolved problems, and of critical, unanswered doubts or questionings. As Helen Keller has said, "The world is full of troubles." We do well to remember, however, that she said more than this. Her full statement was: "The world is full of troubles; it is also full of the overcoming of troubles." She thus sounded the authentic Christian note.

It brings to memory the word of St. James, the most realistic of the apostles: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into manifold trials." Notice he did not say that we should count it an occasion of ordinary congratulation should we find ourselves beset by many temptations, but an occasion for extraordinary rejoicing, of abounding joy. St. Peter on one occasion, and it was at a time of overwhelming world depression, used almost the same language: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." Again observe, he did not say we should manifest a little satisfaction or delight because of such experiences of hardship, but rather should show forth the maximum of rejoicing and praise.

And note that in the case of each of these apostles he did not indicate that we should rejoice because we were confronted with a single testing or temptation, but, on the other hand, that we should rejoice when we found ourselves in the midst of manifold trials, or, as Weymouth expresses it, "hedged in by various trials" —that is, in the midst of a veritable network, or in the midst of many cross-currents and of a powerful undertug of adverse influences.

Can We Rejoice Today?

This prompts the reflection, Why should we abound in joy in days like these of widespread and profound depression and severe testing? In other words, what are the advantages of manifold trials and impossible situations? One great advantage of being confronted with so many difficulties and trials as characterize the present time in every field we represent is that all this tends to promote humility. An attitude of humility is the one which has ever ensured the greatest progress. The place of humility has ever been the place of power. Never have I found whole peoples so teachable and so openminded as in my recent travels in different parts of the world. The same is also true of the so-called leaders of the nations.

Periods of depression like the present stimulate right habits of self-examination and self-discipline. In the recent rushing, noisy, high-pressure years this practice has all too much dropped out of the lives of all of us. On the other hand we are living in the very days and in the midst of the conditions that make it doubly important that we employ the processes of self-examination.

The life of conflict with real difficulties makes possible the calling out of our latent energies. Modern psychologists teach us that in the frailest invalid powers lie hidden which if released would startle the world.

During the past three years, an attitude of defeatism

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has possessed our leaders; I don't mean that they have acknowledged defeat, but by their attitude they have invited defeat and made it almost inevitable. These times are nothing like the times of our ancestors, and the whole world shares in the difficulties.

Prevailing conditions, therefore, cannot be without their rare advantage if they but facilitate the liberating and faithful use of our hidden talents. Let me stress especially the advantage of the worldwide depression in the way of developing heart power; that is, the power to sympathize, the power to manifest genuine friendship and true brotherhood. You may be sure of two things about every person you meet: one is that that person has had sorrows; and the other is that he has temptations or trials. Anything, therefore, that tends to multiply points of contact between us and the tempted and tried lives surging all around us cannot but be attended with marked gain. I sometimes think that heart power is more needed just now than at any other time because the present is a time of startling

development of divisive influences among men. This is true in the economic realm, in social relations, and also in international and interracial contacts.

History and experience show that it requires the unsolved problems, the baffling difficulties, and the impossible situations to enable men to discover new and better ways. How true this has been in the evolution of medical science! How it has added to the fascination and glory of the progress of inventions which have done so much for the amelioration, uplift, and comfort of the human race! It takes us into the very heart of the most creative work. Such conditions seem to be required to ensure the improvement, true progress, and largest fruitfulness of organizations, societies, and movements. One of the most interesting things which we observe today, wherever we go, is the fact that those in charge of various institutions and enterprises are restudying, restating, and revising their programs and plans. In my judgment the organization or movement which is not by design undergoing such a reexamination and readjustment to changed conditions and outlook is in imminent peril.

First Things First!

It has been interesting to observe another advantage which is being wrought out through the conflict with difficult conditions. I refer to the stimulation of the study of priorities. That word, you will all recall, took on tremendous meaning in the world war. Before that struggle ended the principle implied by that word came to dominate the processes of production, distribution, and consumption not only of the belligerent but also of the neutral countries the world over. Mankind discovered that some things had to be put in the front line and others in the second, the third, or fourth, and in fact that some things had to be cut out or abandoned entirely. This same process is needed quite as much, could we but recognize it, in times of peace. I repeat, it requires real adversity and working under limitations to lead us into an intense and practical application of the law of priority which calls for putting first things first. It is right here that many individuals, in fact whole communities and even governments, often make a major mistake leading to grave calamity, and that is the failure to recognize in times of hardship and depression the supreme importance of the character-building agencies and processes.

Overwhelming needs and demands make inevitable closer cooperation and unity. In every community, large and small, during these days of depression we see multiplying and beautiful illustrations of the way families, groups and entire communities have been drawn together in order to face successfully common hardship.

Let me now call attention to one advantage which may not have occurred to you and which might on the face of it occasion surprise or questioning, and that is that it takes the manifold trials to generate hope. And is not the attitude or spirit of hope precisely what is most needed in every community represented here? Only recently have I come to recognize the strange secret that it requires adverse conditions to develop in us largest hopefulness, and it was the following word of the apostle which led me to see it: "Glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." The logic of this is sound, but I venture to say that it requires actual experience in order to make it irresistible and contagious.

Nobody who has reflected upon his own experiences will question that tribulation, especially when prolonged, as in the case of the present depression, develops patience. Not so much does this development take place in the early as in the later stages of our testing periods. And is it not true that patience, that is the steadfast endurance of strain and burden-bearing and the unflinching, undiscourageable grappling with overwhelming difficulties, makes possible a rich and rewarding experience? Experience of what? First, experience, and a very necessary experience, of our own inadequacy, and likewise the inadequacy of all human wisdom, devising, combinations, and power; in the second place, experience of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ, with whom resides all power in heaven and on earth, to meet the deepest need of the human heart and of the human race. The deeper we enter into such experiences the more abounding, triumphant and contagious will be the spirit of hope generated within us.

It is well in times like these that we remember that experiences of great hardship and trial have made possible great advances. Martin Luther said that before every great opportunity God sent to him some special trial. The history of the centuries teaches the same lesson. This is the ground of my quiet, unshakable confidence that we in North America just now are on the threshold of something freer, fairer, better, more vital and significant than anything we have hitherto known.

Stepping-Stones to Faith

We might sum up all these advantages, especially from a Christian point of view, of periods of most severe depression, manifold trials, and sternest challenges with the central truth that such experiences are to be regarded not as stumbling-blocks but as stepping-stones to the heights of Christian faith and Christian achievement. They should serve to draw us to God and to deepen our acquaintance with him. If we singly and collectively did not have burdens and problems and demands made upon us that we honestly know cannot be met in our own wisdom and strength, we would by no means be so likely to seek God's face, to comply with his conditions, and to experience his superhuman power.

What is the price which must be paid if we in our present severe testing time are to realize these values and to capitalize these advantages?

First of all we must steadfastly resist pessimism, for it is a disease judged by its results. Pessimists can never lead us out. Then we must do more thinking—fresh, thorough, courageous, conclusive thinking—if we would discover and overcome the causes of our troubles and chart new and better courses for mankind. We must also school ourselves to take long views. Let anyone look thoughtfully over the past centuries and he will see how darker issues and more discouraging situations have been met and triumphed over. Let him

look forward to the day of inevitable triumph and he cannot be daunted or dismayed by what now surrounds us. And let us frequent the mountains—the mount of vision, the mount of warning, the mount of transfiguration and the mount of sacrifice—and we will turn a time of depression into one of elevation.

Above all, let us keep our eyes in the right direction—looking to the Prince Leader of the Faith, Jesus Christ. It is in following his lead, and in association with him, and in constant reliance on his illimitable resources that we shall certainly emerge into the better day.

A Peculiar People

BY WARE W. WIMBERLY

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. I Peter 2:9.

IF YOU are a Christian, you are a peculiar person. You may not think the term complimentary, for it may suggest to you the crime of being different. At least, some one has suggested that in this day of standardization, to be different is criminal. The designers of our clothes complain that we dress too much alike. I have read more than one article in current magazines to the effect that we even eat too much alike. And certainly the complaint is general that we think too much alike, that we are crowd-minded, that our thinking is dictated by the same newspapers, magazines, movies, and radio programs. We might even suggest that only geniuses, martyrs, and insane men dare to be different. But to that list, let us add one more—Christians.

God told the children of Israel that they were a "special people," or, as Moffatt translates it, a "prized possession." Paul, speaking to the new Israel of Christianity, writes to Titus that God would "purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And St. Peter says: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." John, in Revelation, sees the name of God written upon the foreheads of his children; he sees them sealed with the seal of heaven, that they might be known among men as God's prized possession, above all people upon the face of the earth. Other men were branded with the mark of Caesar or of idols, but Christians had upon them the brand of God. Scripturally, a Christian cannot be true to his profession and escape the destiny of peculiarity; he is a marked man.

But the peculiarity of Christians is not a fact merely because the Bible says so. It is a fact as a matter of experience. I have been writing a series of sketches on Christians I have known and heard about. And as I take each character, I have had to cast about for that distinctive characteristic which marks a man as a Christian. Sometimes we have to look quite close to find it, but it is always there—that act, attitude, or attribute which indicates that here is a follower of Christ. He is not always morally perfect or intellectually brilliant, certainly neither necessarily aged nor wealthy. He may be as weak morally as Magdalene, as prone to err as Simon Peter, as old as Anna, as wise as Simeon, as rich as Zacchaeus, or as poor as the widow with her two mites. But look closely and you will discover the seal of God upon his forehead.

Some one will say that this was true once, but it is no longer true. Christians no longer stand out and are not as a people set apart. If that be true—and it probably is—that is not alone because there are no sincere Christians in the world but because the leaven of Christianity has spread to affect the whole of society. Governments are talking about the supreme necessity of international good will, our schools are introducing character education into their curricula, and business has long been stressing the importance of service and cooperation. Christianity is a trifle more triumphant than we realize, and certain Christian principles have lost the mark of peculiarity by being generally accepted as sound social methods.

And yet there is still enough indifference to Christianity, still enough reliance upon self, still enough hate and prejudice and lust and folly in the world for us to know a Christian when we see one. He is still a peculiar person if he attempts to live out his profession of faith.

I

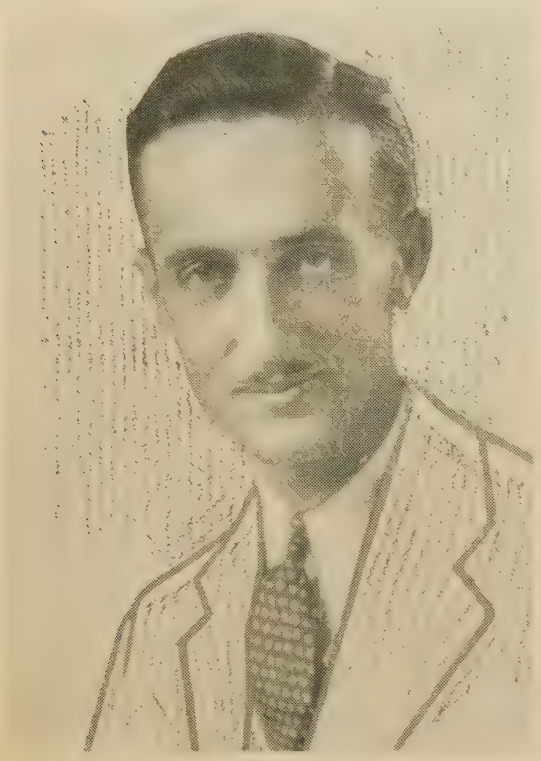
First, whatever the world may believe about him or his God, the Christian is confident of God and his sonship of him. He is sustained by an inner conviction that God is with him. The Lord is his good shepherd, his refuge and strength; a very present help in time of trouble; the sun shall not smite him by day or the moon by night; in his life he feels God live and move and have his being; above all else, God is a Father, as strong, as kind, as sacrificial as Jesus Christ his Lord. The peculiarity of a Christian, then, is marked first of all by what he believes, by the inner conviction that God is like Christ.

And if you have that conviction, it is certain to set you apart from the rest of mankind. Not every one can look upon God as a Christian looks upon him. Confusion is today striking at the mind and heart of more than one modern. What can a man believe? is both a popular and a puzzling question. Too many of us do not know what to believe, where to stand, or which direction to turn. Does a week pass but what a book issues from the press purporting to minister to our doubt and confusion? Not only have many moderns lost their belief in hell but in heaven also; not only in the devil and his angels but in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And that is not to say that there are not sound arguments against holding such beliefs. Modern thought may have revealed the fallacy of many of our creeds and dogmas. To their own satisfaction, modern thinkers may have definitely proved our Bible to be anything else but the inerrant Word of God; they may have shown our idea of God to be a rank impossibility, a thoroughly childish fancy. A great deal of learning and research may have gone into their conclusions and

they may be perfectly satisfied with what they have found.

But the Christian is a peculiar person, always has been, and always will be. Paul said that the Cross was a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, and yet writes, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." And so some modern Christian, thoroughly versed in the wisdom of this world and perfectly aware of sound arguments against the reasonableness of his faith, yet finds himself on Sunday morning singing with his fellow Christians, "In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time." Or buffeted here and there and beaten to earth by the trials and tragedies of life, he follows his Master into Gethsemane and there



Ware W. Wimberly

prays, "Not my will but thine be done." The world looks on and says, "Fool! to pray to such a God." But nevertheless he prays and arises from his knees with his prayer answered.

"I am a strange sort of a person," a young man once told me. "I read a good deal of literature antagonistic to the Christian faith, a good many books and magazines which not only attack but quietly ignore Christianity as a factor in living. And yet there is no sneer so scornful nor any philosophy so profound but what I can still pray each morning and evening, 'Our Father.' Many times I'm depressed and worried, but something within me drives me to my knees."

"Something within me drives me to my knees." That is the experience of countless numbers of Christians. The skeptic will call that something wishful thinking or give it some highsounding psychological term and the Christian will call it the kingdom of God within us or the Spirit of Christ. But the fact remains. The Christian's heart is lighted by an inner conviction that cannot be put out. He is a peculiar person.

II

St. Peter said that he was peculiar for a purpose, that he "might show forth the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." And in order to do that, the Christian assumes his most characteristic role, that of a worshiper. Christians are a worshiping people. There are those who can see no reason for worshiping. When Sunday comes, they feel themselves to be just as well off on the golf links, on a river bank, on a pleasure trip, or at home reading the comic supplement or listening to the radio. But there is something peculiar about Christians. They think it more important to worship God in the beauty of holiness, to show forth his praises in thanksgiving, intercession, and confession. Their pleasure is in the worship of him who is their God and Father.

He who is Christian is necessarily marked by that peculiarity. Worship is written upon his heart by the hand of God. By the seal of worship God shall know his own. Someone may say that worship does not necessarily imply a church or church attendance. But to be honest with ourselves, it usually does. We are almost safe in saying that one of the peculiarities of a Christian is that he attends church. The Christian seeks the temple of God, whether it be a metropolitan cathedral or a rural schoolhouse.

And the empty benches so common today give heavy emphasis to this peculiarity, this noble eccentricity. Once I heard of a church with only one worshiper, an abandoned church which would not be abandoned. Sunday after Sunday a little old lady went there to kneel and pray and read her Bible. She must have looked very odd kneeling alone in that empty church, and yet very beautiful, too; there's something almost sublime about the picture the more we think of it.

"You are a peculiar people." You find the temple of God and worship there. And it is really an absurd thing to do when there are a hundred and one places to go in this remarkable age of ours.

III

"That ye might show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." That you might show forth his praises by the way you live, by your attitude toward your fellow man, by your hope in an eternity beyond time and place.

The Christian is peculiar in that he still believes in a high level of morality. Our moral codes have become a little wabbly of late. We are not certain about right and wrong; there is no broad black line of demarcation between the two. And some say there shouldn't be, that we have too long been hemmed in by inhibitions, preconceptions, and taboos. But the Christian is peculiar enough to believe in a right and wrong. He believes in the supremacy of conscience. Honor is sacred to him. Good habits are desirable. Virtue and purity are still admirable and commendable.

The world may laugh at his fears and stigmatize him as old-fashioned, but he believes with Paul, as Moffatt translates a verse in Titus, that God wants for himself a "clean people." And it has never been easy to be that, to be in the world and yet not of it. It is much more simple to make concessions and to compromise. And yet the Christian, foolishly enough, clings to his belief in the ideals of moral courage, strength, and purity. In a world where immorality is accepted, the Christian dares to be uncommon, to be moral.

And more than moral; for he goes farther than a cold, barren, and purely selfish morality. He is charitable. "What do ye more than the Pharisees?" Jesus asked his followers. His followers must leaven the world with the salt of the "more," "the second mile," "the cloak also," "the other cheek." Like men beside themselves, they return good for evil, do good to them who hate, bless those by whom they are persecuted. If their enemy hungers, they feed him. If he thirsts, they give him drink. If he has wronged them, they freely forgive him. In a world of selfishness, they live unselfishly, esteeming others more than themselves. Love is their first law, the cornerstone of their faith. As one of their greatest leaders said, they may have all things and, lacking this, have nothing. The seal of the love of God is upon their foreheads, and the inscription upon the seal is a wooden cross.

It is a wooden cross set against the background of eternity. For they live not alone in time, but in eternity. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Hope lights up their life. Faith holds up their hands when the battle goes against them. A strange strength empties itself into their souls. In trial, in sorrow, in death, they dare to hope, believing that God is over all and in all, reconciling the world unto himself. I once heard a father stand at the grave of his

A New Year's Prayer

By Hugh Thomson Kerr

ALMIGHTY and Everlasting God, Ancient of Days, God of our fathers, God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, draw nigh to us in this sacred hour and be to us the joy and hope of our hearts. From Thee we come, to Thee we go. Thou art the refuge and strength of Thy children from year to year, from generation to generation. We worship Thee, who art the Ever-living God, the Father Everlasting.

We stand at the portal of a new year. We hear Thy voice saying, "Behold I make all things new." Enable us by Thy Spirit to enter into the experience of new penitence for sin, new faith in Thee and in all mankind, new experiences of Thy love, new insight into the riches of Thy grace so that our minds may be illumined, our hearts lifted up, our wills consecrated to a new obedience.

This is a day of memory. We look back over the way we have come and whisper to our hearts, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." There are those who have enriching memories of joy and happiness. Some have experienced apparent failure and disappointment and for some it has been a year of suffering and discipline. To all of us it has been a year's march towards the glory that is to be revealed in us and for us. By the remembrance of Thy great love and our exceeding need, by the remembrance of Thy goodness and our unworthiness, by the remembrance of Thy divine Fatherhood and our love of home and little children, by the memories of our dead and the ever-living Christ, draw us by Thy Spirit nearer and nearer to Thyself.

This is a day of hope. The song of the Christmas Gospel is in our hearts. We see the coming of a new heaven and a new earth. We see visions and dream dreams. We behold the day when peace like a shaft of light will lie across the land, when justice will find expression in social and industrial life, when civilization will be glorified with good will, when the spirit of selfishness will give place to the spirit of service, when grinding poverty will cease, when sorrow and sighing will flee away. God of our fathers, bless our country. May we be unashamed in the counsels of the nations. Lead us and all mankind in the paths of righteousness for Thy name's sake.

This is a day for action. We would rise up and follow Thee. We would follow where Christ leads. We would follow on and up to the City of God. We would hear Thy voice today. We would do Thy will today. Speak to us and we will hear. Reveal Thy way of life for us and we will obey. To the aged be Thou their strength and song. To the young be Thou their vision and inspiration. To little children be like a glad surprise. To the sick and lonely, to those who have lost faith in themselves and in life, be like the morning dawn. If it be given to us to see the new year close, may it be our best year and may we prosper and be in health, even as our souls prosper.

O Thou, who keepest watch above the shadows, give to us all here and far away the assurance that in defeat as in success, in the darkness as in the light, in sorrow as in joy, in death as in life, we are forever safe in Thy gracious keeping. Go with us as we step across the threshold into the new year and may the Lord bless us and keep us; the Lord make His face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us: the Lord lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

little girl and sing, "Death is only a dream." Christians do such things, having hope in things that are unseen.

IV

A peculiar people, certainly. But God needs us for himself, because the world needs us, this muddled and worried world, groping in the dark for it knows not what. In the words of Dr. Glover, quoted by Dr. Kerr in a sermon before the Presbyterian general assembly, we need to "out-think, and out-die, and outlive" the world about us. The world will be saved not primarily by preaching or teaching or legislating or reforming, but by a peculiar people conscious of their peculiarity.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." It is your calling, your destiny, your cross, your crown.

Firm Foundations

By Clarence W. Kemper

Everyone who heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. Matthew 7:24.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, yea and forever. Hebrews 13:8.

A YOUNG man thirty years of age standing against the hillside boldly declared to his hearers that his words were deathless. Certainly not because he spoke them but rather because in them he was declaring the ultimate truth for any and all generations. What words! How they must have leaped from his lips! "Whoever hears and does them," we hear him say, "shall be built on rock." But while he was speaking the Roman armor frowned upon him and the Greek philosopher smiled. But where are these smiling contemporaries? It is ours to see that he had spiritual insight; that he spoke words of ultimate significance; that his convictions have come catapulting themselves through the lives of succeeding generations.

Look at another picture. The writer of Hebrews saw the sacred and revered institutions going to pieces about his head. The people were depressed and despairing. The Roman army was ringed about Jerusalem and it might fall before sunrise. The temple, the altars, the ritual and the priesthood were about to vanish. Their sacred rootage ran back into the yesterdays. They were saying to each other: "If these go, out of which the new-born Christian faith came, what hope is there for this infant faith?" Again a man stood up to say to his contemporaries: "Jesus Christ is better than prophets, angels, Moses and Aaron. He is the same yesterday, today and forever."

Some years ago a party of us were going through the Yellowstone. We were in the midst of natural beauty unparalleled. We had come to the end of a perfect day. While at dinner in the Canyon hotel we felt tables move, saw chandeliers sway, for an earthquake was shaking our beautiful world. Ours is such a world of advantages, beauty and privileges as never known before, but we have felt a strange shaking of her foundations. Surely this is the kind of a world we live in and must speak to today.

Individual standards have crumbled. Any minister of religion will tell of increasing problems at this point. Twice recently I was called to minister in a home where hope and faith had gone, while maddened will had undertaken to clip the cord of life. "I was afraid to go on with life," was the remark of a young woman who tried to end all. In a great university of our country a questionnaire was circulated among students and the question, "How may I conquer fear?" was the one leading all others.

Home and family life are shaken all too frequently. A minister who has served twenty-three years in Reno, Nevada, tells us that he has interviewed a large number of persons whose homes had been wrecked, and that fully ninety per cent declared that they had started with high hopes but that their homes had not proved what they had fondly dreamed they would; the dream castle had come tumbling down like a house of cards.

In organized religion many old landmarks are being removed. In a recent convention of a national denominational body, the prevailing thought was reflected in the prayer of an honored leader: "O God, life is too much for us."

A Shaken World

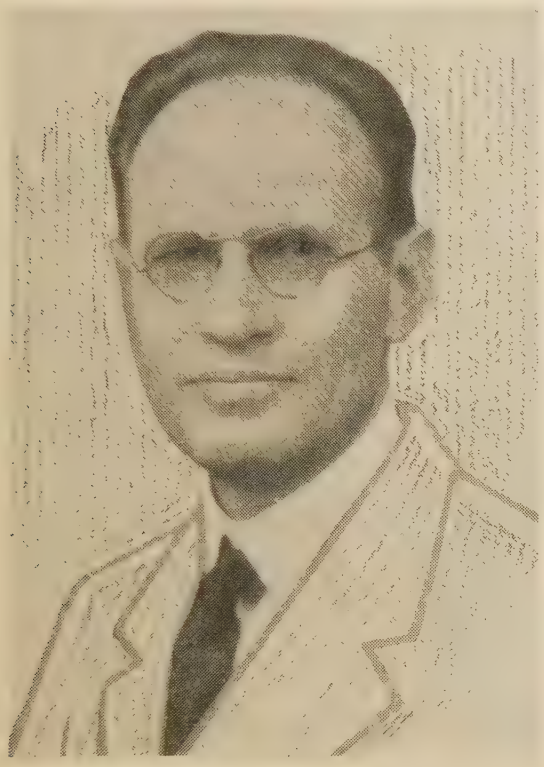
Business and industry have been rudely shaken. Science gave us the machine from which we had hoped so much, but now like a mighty frankenstein it has all but turned upon us to rend us. We are now in mortal fear lest it may destroy its creator. As we listen we can hear the Master's voice, "How much is a man better than a sheep!" Translated into our modern jargon we hear: "Man is better than the factory system, than mass production and profit motive." We are surely learning today that our boasted American system is not divine.

In races and nations we are in flux. God made men of many races, color and heritage. All have capacity for brotherhood and sonship of God. Who are we to talk glibly of superior and inferior races? When did the Heavenly Father give to any of us the right to pass upon his children? C. F. Andrews was preaching in India. Coming out of the chapel he found the saintly Gandhi leaning against the outer wall, because his color prevented his coming in to listen to Mr. Andrews' gospel message. We are all indeed "looking for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." All others crumble into ruins.

Truth and righteousness are never out of date. We recall the early experience of Horace Bushnell. He felt that he had lost his faith and that he could not go on. At last he reflected, "I know it is right to do right and I will begin there." Acting upon this he found his faith returning, and he in his "Christian Nurture" became the pioneer of our modern religious education movement.

Love is never outmoded. A young doctor gave his life at the end of his first year of medical missions in

the orient. The worldly-wise regarded this as terrible waste, but when word of his death reached the campus of his alma mater several of his associates volunteered to take his place. A Quaker missionary died in China, killed at the hands of the people he came to save, but when his friends followed him to his grave they put on the floral piece one word, "Victory!" We are reminded of those first Christians who "loved not their



Clarence W. Kemper

own lives." "Love never faileth." Well said a contemporary preacher: "Wherever life is offered to a cause, that cause will go forward."

A God of love and justice is forever the same God. "Oh, sir, give us God," said the simple folk of the field in the British Islands in the long past, and that is the deepest longing of the modern intellectual generation. As we must have food, so we must have God. We are aware of the variations in the concepts of God in our day, but that is not basic. When we are hungry we are not concerned about the concepts of bread, nor in the spiritual hunger for God are we fundamentally interested in the concepts of God. "Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Thee," spoke St. Augustine long ago—for all of us today and forever. "The word of our God shall stand forever," spoke the immortal Isaiah when men were despairing and faith was decadent or dead.

Say to America in her travail and her depressed spirit and hunger, "The word of our God shall stand forever."

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, yea and forever." Still he says as he did on the Galilean hillside: "Every one who hears my words and does them, I will liken to a wise man who built his house upon the rock." Today as ever "Christ is our door of hope in our valley of Achor." Said Lloyd George at the end of the World war, "It is Christ or chaos." Men and nations are at his judgment seat in this perilous hour to determine whether they will build on rock or sand. Surely, we have had enough of the sand foundation in national life, international relations, economic life. Clever politicians with their cheap catchwords mean nothing in comparison with those basic laws of wellbeing vibrant in the words of Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount is the most needed document in the world today. It knows nothing of this strutting nationalism, acquisitive economic life and racial superiority which have taken us almost to the gates of hell. We wonder if we are making as much of Jesus in this day of our extremity as we should. We sing for the church, but we might well sing for the whole world:

> The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord,
> She is his new creation by water and the word.

Is there any hymn which comes with more appropriateness today than this:

> On Christ the solid rock I stand,
> All other ground is sinking sand.

And when we sing it we have no theological concept in mind at all. We think only that he is the personality indispensable to our vexed life. In the shaken world of the year 70 A. D. the writer of the Hebrews explained: "That those things which are not shaken may remain." Down goes the incidental that the essential may stand. Away go all our false messiahs, but Jesus stands by us to speak the imperishable word to our age. Like words ringing in our ears, we hear him say: "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Comfort Ye My People!

"Comfort ye my people," said God to his prophet in the Babylonian bondage, when the prophets were cynical, silent or dead. In that memorable dialogue we hear the question: "Cry—What shall I cry?" Above all the confusion there rings out, "The word of our God shall stand forever."

"The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ." Jesus is the only person who is seriously bidding for the heart of the orient, remarked a leader of India. Indeed, Jesus is the only serious solution for orient or occident. King of Kings and Lord of Lords! And he shall reign forever and ever!

He is the king of character, the king of love, the king of grace, the king of truth, the king of personal life, the ruler of family circles, the destined king of community, civic, economic, national and world life.

"Every one who heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock."

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, yea and forever."

Dealing with Disgruntled Members

By John Timothy Stone

THE word "disgruntled" seems to be a little harsh and unsympathetic, but it is just the word that meets the case.

In almost all churches there are those members who for one reason or another are out of sympathy with the church and who do not hesitate to express ill-will or grievance whenever the opportunity affords. Few will wilfully go out of their way to speak against the church, but their spirit is revealed more in a sort of self-defence of their irregularity, non-attendance or general indifference. Usually back of such cases there is some cause, whether worthy or unwarrantable. There has been some neglect, some oversight, or slight. It may be that the individual has been oversensitive. However, there may have been a just cause for such feeling and attitude, which the minister himself does not know. In fact, he may be entirely unconscious of such cause.

The result, however, of such a condition may grow to be disastrous, not only to the material and spiritual welfare of the parish, but in the life and leadership of the minister himself.

An accumulation of such cases will, in time, form a general ill-will and combine to create a condition which cannot be easily—if ever—obviated, and which may lead to separation and disunion.

• *Possible Tragedies in the Making*

Of course, we should admit that there are cases and questions where individual character must be asserted and where righteous action must be taken, contrary to the judgment, wish and determination of the wrong-doers.

No man strengthens his position by being weak or vacillating, nor by trying to appease enemies or opponents who are the result of his assertion of right and principle. Such enemies, however, are usually recognized and outspoken, but rarely subtle and undermining in their attitude. These men seldom belong to the disgruntled class, and if members of one's church are usually friendly and frank even in their opposition.

The "disgruntled" class, however, are not so easily discovered and handled. They usually speak "sub rosa" and are frequently "whisperers." The grievance back of their ill-will becomes aggravated with time, and those of like class with them keep the subject stirred up, which results in their constant irritability and increasing ire. From time to time exaggerated repetitions of their utterances, or evidences of their attitude, come to the pastor's hearing, and he is inclined to treat the matter with a responding irritability, or cast it off as unworthy of consideration. As time develops the cleavage widens, and all thought of adjustment or reconcilation withdrawn.

John Timothy Stone

An accumulation of such cases and incidents will tend to depress a minister, especially when he is overworked and overwrought. Nervous reactions result; work drags, imaginative conditions develop, and often dissatisfaction, impatience and restlessness lead to a desired, if not actual, change in pastorate, destroying relationships which should be amicable, healthful, inspiring and constructive.

Why not face these questions as they come and as they are, and deal with them thoughtfully, patiently, gracefully and sanely?

• *Misjudgment Not One-Sided*

Many a parishioner is misjudged, as well as pastor, because of unwonted irritability or insufficient understanding. Either party, or both, may be at fault. A warm friendship may have been injured or destroyed by a lack of kindly insight, and the evidence of a gentle spirit.

"A soft answer (still) turneth away wrath," and "grievous words (still) stir up anger." It is also true that "he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city," but the seer might have added: "He that ruleth his spirit is likely to take the city as well."

We still are able to "overcome evil with good," if we "let patience have her perfect work." "Gentleness, meekness and faith" are still among "the fruits of the spirit."

Several personal illustrations occur to me, which are sufficiently distanced by time to repeat without injury.

• *A Misunderstanding Is Mended*

I received a very sharp and pointed letter from two women who frankly denounced my refusal to let them bring their letters to our church, stating that they were humiliated, disappointed and chagrined at my action, and that under the circumstances they had no desire for such a pastor, and withdrew all interest in the transfer, "grateful that they knew me in time." They were respectable and gentle women. I was perplexed and nonplussed. What had I done? At first slightly angered at the letter, I quickly recoiled to become amused at myself for my apparent tactlessness in bringing about such a condition.

In my eagerness to assist a fellow-pastor, in whose church they were members—a man with a church which was slowly disintegrating, and in which one member after another had withdrawn to another church; a pastor who was somewhat discouraged, and a church from which many members had already come to our church—in trying to save him and his church, I had given the impression that *we did not want* these particular women. The fact was, we wanted them very much. They were of a splendid type, but in our eagerness to help a friend and save the other church we had overlooked their viewpoint. Instead of answering the letter, I went that very afternoon to their home, and was graciously and somewhat reluctantly received. With an open heart, a kindly and apologetic manner, I stated the case exactly as it was; told them my error—that we wanted them very much and that I was trying to help the other pastor and the church. Then I frankly asked them to forgive me, as Christian women and as friends. The result

was almost immediate. They told their pastor that I had been most gracious in his interest and had made everything right with them, and they became not only efficient and enthusiastic, but very regular members of our parish, and we were always the closest of friends.

● *"Better Judgment Said—Wait!"*

Another instance I remember which grew out of an impulsive and unwise utterance of mine in the pulpit, prompted by a newspaper report. It is always unwise to accept such a report without verifying it.

My pulpit utterance implied a personality and a rebuke which was not so intended, but which was so interpreted. The offended party made the trite statement to one of the officers in passing out of the church, that he "would never darken its doors again." The officer, my friend, in repeating it to me said: "What's the difference? Let him go!" Then he added the other trite remark, "If the coat fits, let him put it on."

My impulse was to go immediately to that man's house, but better judgment said—wait. The more I considered the matter, the more I felt the man was right. Without intending to be personal, I had failed to consider that this prominent parishoner was so identified with the cause and work in question, to which reference had been made, that the average hearer would have very naturally associated him with my remark.

I realized and recognized that I had not only been impulsive, but injudicious, in referring to the matter as I had from the pulpit, and that the form of attack was not warranted. The man was one of our most conscientious citizens. Undoubtedly, there were facts and relationships I did not know.

Going to the man in question in a courteous and open manner, a few days later, I told him frankly that although I had intended no personality in my remark, I felt I had been injudicious in speaking as I did without further information, and that I came to talk with him about it and to ask his forgiveness if I had in any way injured him in heart or reputation. I spoke with deep sincerity. He was a true man. He stopped for a moment, hesitated; then took my hand and told me he had been oversensitive; that there were aspects of the question which I did not know. He told of his high regard for me and of his higher regard for my present attitude. Ultimately, I found I had misjudged the whole situation. That man and I became very warm friends. He became an elder in my church, respected, useful and regular in attendance. At the time of his death his widow told me that the saddest day of her life had been that Sunday when he came home angered; and one of the happiest days of her life had been when the matter had been cleared up.

● *Why Lose Him Whom We Might Win?*

Other incidents are called to mind by the repetition of these characteristic ones, but our point has been gained—Why lose the man whom we might win? Why should the human element rob us of the divine? Why not win the church adherent who has been driven away by some minor cause?

Recently a word of irate criticism was silenced by a friend, who said: "Even if it is true, consider how far his virtues outclass his vices!"

"Let us recompense to no man evil for evil, but let us provide things honest in the sight of all, and if possible, as much as lieth in us, live peaceably with all men." Let us "avenge not ourselves, but rather give place unto wrath." Let us not "overcome evil with good."

Timely Verse

New Year's Thoughts

LET us walk softly, friend;
For strange paths lie before us all untrod,
The New Year, spotless from the hand of God,
Is thine and mine, O friend.

Let us walk straightly, friend;
Forget the crooked paths behind us now,
Press on with steadier purpose on our brow,
To better deeds, O friend.

Let us walk gladly, friend;
Perchance some greater good than we have known
Is waiting for us, or some fair hope flown
Shall yet return, O friend.

Let us walk humbly, friend;
Slight not the heart's-ease blooming round our feet;
The laurel blossoms are not half so sweet,
Or lightly gathered, friend.

Let us walk kindly, friend;
We cannot tell how long this life shall last,
How soon these precious years be overpast;
Let Love walk with us, friend.

Let us walk quickly, friend;
Work with our might while lasts our little stay,
And help some halting comrade on the way;
And may God guide us, friend.

LILLIAN GRAY.

A Prayer for the New Year

O YEAR that is going, take with you
Some evil that dwells in my heart;
Let selfishness, doubt,
With the old year go out—
With joy I would see them depart.

O year that is going, take with you
Impatience and wilfulness—pride;
The sharp word that slips
From those too hasty lips,
I would cast, with the old year aside.

O year that is coming, bring with you
Some virtue of which I have need;
More patience to bear
And more kindness to share,
And more love that is true love indeed.

LAURA F. ARMITAGE.

WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE

SEVERAL years ago there appeared a book entitled "Did Jesus Mean It?" which elicited a great deal of interest. It was by Rev. FRANK D. ADAMS, minister of the Church of Our Father, Detroit. He has written other books. Dr. Adams was ordained in the Universalist ministry in 1906, and his earlier pastorates were at Urbana, Ill., Indianapolis, Spokane, and Elgin, Ill.; for the past nine years he has been at Detroit. He has just begun a new pastorate, at Unity church, Oak Park, Ill. He has his B. D. degree from Ryder Divinity school. Dr. Adams was honored by being elected president of the Universalist general convention.

Dr. LYNN HAROLD HOUGH *has had a* varied career—as minister, educator, administrator and author. Entering the ministry in 1898, he had several pastorates, among them churches in Brooklyn and Baltimore. In 1914 he went to Garrett seminary, Evanston, as professor of the history of theology; after five years' of teaching he served for a brief period as president of Northwestern university. In 1920 he returned to the pastorate, and was for eight years minister of Central Methodist church, Detroit, following this with two years at the American church in Montreal. Since 1930 he has been professor of homiletics and comprehensive scholarship at Drew seminary—where he received his B. D. degree in 1905. Dr. Hough has written many books.

From 1925 to last autumn, Rev. WILLIAM H. BODDY ministered in Chicago—at the Woodlawn Presbyterian and First Presbyterian churches. Earlier pastorates were at Spokane, Wash., and at Portland and Hood River, Ore. Last November he began in a new field, at Westminster Presbyterian church, Minneapolis. He is a member of the Presbyterian church extension board and of the board of national missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

Dr. JOSEPH FORT NEWTON *began his* ministry at First Baptist church, Paris, Tex.; later he founded and ministered to the People's church at Dixon, Ill., and from there went to Cedar Rapids, Ia., as pastor of the Liberal Christian church. In 1916, he was called to the City Temple, London. Three years later he returned to America, accepting a call to the Church of the Divine Paternity (Unitarian), New York. Since 1925 he has been in Philadelphia, at the Memorial Church of St. Paul, and at St. James Episcopal church.

The career of Dr. JOHN R. MOTT *has* been one of continuous service to the Y. M. C. A. and to world missions. Beginning as student secretary of the International committee of the Y. M. C. A. associations, in 1888, he continued in that position until 1915; he was general secretary of the committee from 1915 to 1931. He was also foreign secretary of the Y from 1898 to 1915, and general secretary of the national council of the Y. M. C. A. of the U. S. A. until 1928. Dr. Mott has been chairman of the World's committee of the Y since 1926. From 1888 to 1920 he was chairman of the executive committee of the Student Volunteer movement, and from 1895 to 1920 general secretary of the World's Student Christian federation—chairman of the same from 1920 to 1928. He was chairman of the continuation committee of the World Missionary conferences, Edinburgh, from 1910 to 1920, and has been chairman of the International Missionary council since 1921. All of which seems like a very prosaic Who's Who, but it is here given to afford some idea of the stupendous service Dr. Mott has rendered. The sermon included in this issue was preached at the Chicago Sunday Evening club.

Having graduated from the University of Nebraska, Rev. WARE W. WIMBERLY entered McCormick (now Presbyterian) seminary, Chicago, and completed his work there in 1927. He is minister of the First Presbyterian church, Greenfield, Ia.

Since 1923 Rev. CLARENCE W. KEMPER has ministered at the Baptist Temple, Charleston, W. Va. Earlier pastorates were at Chicago, Cincinnati, Minneapolis and Lansing, Mich. He received his B. D. degree at the University of Chicago in 1912. He has served as a member of the executive committee of the Northern Baptist convention.

Rev. HUGH T. KERR *is minister of the* Shadyside Presbyterian church, Pittsburgh.

Dr. JOHN TIMOTHY STONE *is president* of the Presbyterian Theological seminary, Chicago.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

MARCUS E. LINDSAY, Grace Presbyterian, Wichita, Kan. "A Study in Crosses." Mk. 10:21—"And come, take up the cross and follow me." Matt. 26:24—"And take up his cross, and follow me." Lk. 9:23—"And take up his cross daily, and follow me."

FOR YOUR SERMON TITLE AND TEXT

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Title of sermon

.....

Text used (Write out the text)

.....

Name of minister

.....

Name of church

.....

Address

WILLIAM H. WYLIE, First Methodist, Columbus, Ind. "The Peril of Privilege." Matt. 8:11, 12—"Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down . . . in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness."

RAYMOND G. CLARK, Congregational Christian, Piqua, O. "The Meaning of Scars." Gal. 6:17—"I have branded on my body the marks of Jesus."

RODNEY L. MCQUARY, Lynnhurst Congregational, Minneapolis. "Overcoming Our Fears." Psa. 46:1—"God is our strength . . . therefore we will not fear."

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE absorbing subject for Europe and America—and for the rest of the world, looking on—during the month of December has been the question of the payment of the Allied war debts to the United States. Six nations, including Great Britain and Italy, paid on December 15. Five nations, including France, defaulted. Britain paid in round numbers, $95,000,000 and France defaulted, in round numbers, on $19,000,000. Both the payment and the default have precipitated a crisis which, alas, finds a lame-duck government in charge of the United States. Congress, the President and the President-elect present the picture of a triangular stalemate. Mr. Roosevelt has twice declined Mr. Hoover's invitation to collaborate on a policy. Congress has pigeon-holed Mr. Hoover's suggestion for the appointment of a commission to survey the situation and present recommendations. If Mr. Hoover concludes that it is futile to appoint the commission himself in view of the brevity of the remainder of his term, Mr. Roosevelt's first task after March 4th will be to make reply to our debtors' request for a reexamination of their debts. I believe history will honor President Hoover for his patriotic attempt to get early action by cooperating with Mr. Roosevelt. And I believe Mr. Roosevelt, if he declines the magnanimous offers of the President, will not add to his countrymen's faith in his unselfish desire to serve the nation. In any event, whether it be done by Mr. Hoover or by Mr. Roosevelt, it is to be hoped that the debts, disarmament and world trade, including a stable international monetary standard, may be thrown into a pool and settled by a single international agreement.

The War Debts

The Book of the Month

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES. *By Lloyd C. Douglas. Houghton, Mifflin and Co.* $2.50.

THOUSANDS of ministers who are preaching sermons on Dr. Douglas's first book, "Magnificent Obsession" (which, the publishers announce, is selling in new editions faster than ever before) will find in his new novel a vital pulpit theme. The earlier book had as its theme the energizing and greatening of one's life by doing unpublished kindnesses—that is, kindnesses known only to the recipient whose lips were sealed in honor never to disclose the name of the doer. It was an ethical application of the text, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." Dr. Douglas's new book deals with the awakening of the soul and the release of its energies which follow the banishment of grudges and actual practice of forgiveness. Dr. Douglas is an American Congregational preacher whose present parish is that of St. James United church in Montreal. He has a genius for illuminating the thoughts of Jesus by weaving them into the fabric of actual human relationships,. Life is bitter and unfruitful for all too many of us because we harbor grudges against people, and because we cultivate self-pity. Release, a new and joyous freedom, comes when we learn to forgive and to seek sincerely the forgiveness of others for our own thoughtless and wilful wrong doing.

A Thought for the Month

MINISTERS and all moral leaders need just now a vigorous and wholesome skepticism—a skepticism grounded in the deepest faith. The world is depressed. The church is distraught. Many of our brother ministers are desperate. There is breakdown everywhere. The mood which accompanies this state of things is one that will be susceptible to all kinds of alluring makeshifts. The critical faculties are in a state of fatigue. It will be easy in these days for ministers to take up with every plausible novelty or with some homiletic "stunt," or to fall back upon methods and doctrines which have long since been discredited. The well balanced minister will regard with robust skepticism every attempt to capitalize the distraction of the moment by evangelistic tricks. The concept of evangelism is native to Christianity, but no function of the church has been more sadly abused. The mood of the time lends itself to the revival of those abuses which in the past two decades have been pretty well eliminated from our American church life. They ought not to be allowed to come back in our hour of weakness. "House party evangelism" is now intriguing many religious people. Unquestionably there is good in it. But thoughtful leaders are bound to view it with grave misgivings. The Barthian theology opens the way for a revival of obscurantism in religious thought and life. There can be no question that Barth is directing our attention to neglected aspects of religious reality. But the acceptance of his apologetic would be a costly set-back for Christianity. Thoughtful men will guard themselves against adopting a theology of the slump. This is a time for the Christian ministry to keep a level head and to take no path except one that leads forward to Christ.

Ministers and the Present Crisis

Charles Clayton Morrison

The Minister's Professional Magazine—

The Christian Century Pulpit

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